



National Centre for Technology in Education

Ionad Náisiúnta don Teicneolaíocht san Oideachas

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Software Central

The National Centre for Technology in Education is an Irish Government agency established to provide advice, support and information on the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in education.

NEWS & EVENTS

FIS Summer Course

The NCTE is running a FIS (Film in Schools) summer course in Dingle, Co. Kerry from the 6th Jul - 10th July. The FIS methodology uses digital video and the medium of film to explore the primary curriculum. More...



ICT ADVICE & SUPPORT

Scoilnet Webhosting-Blogging Service

The Scoilnet webhosting-blogging service provides both a website hosting and a blogging service for Primary and Post Primary schools. The service, which supports different types of content, allows schools to easily develop a school website or school blog and host it for free on the schools broadband network. More...

CPD

Online Course

Registration in NCTE online Teaching. A highly be com

CPD

Video exemplars for post

Current Events



New Look Imagebank

Topical News Items

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ICT Purchasing Frameworks
Webwise Survey of Internet Usage
F1 in Schools Winners
More from the NCTE Newsletter

NCTE Advice & Support

NCTE - Advice & support

The NCTE's core mission is to promote and support the use and integration of ICT by teachers and students in their daily teaching and learning. It provides a range of supports to schools to facilitate this.

In addition to this handbook and its associated resources, the NCTE provides a number of supports to schools to assist in the development of e-Learning Plans.



There are a wide range of supports provided to schools by the NCTE, which include the following:

Technology Integration

The focus of NCTE's Technology Integration Initiative (TII) is to advise and support schools on all aspects of ICT infrastructure. This initiative provides advice and guidelines in a range of technology areas, including the following:

- ICT equipment configurations and specifications, and procurement procedures
- Information and advice on ICT purchasing frameworks and procurement procedures
- Broadband and centrally hosted services
- School networking including:
 - networking classrooms and other learning areas
 - School servers
- Technical support and maintenance

Advice sheets

The NCTE advice sheets provide information on a range of ICT infrastructure, including equipment, services, technologies and processes. These advice sheets can be a useful

resource when identifying what ICT resources should be purchased for the school and include specifications and definitions of the following:

- computers
- laptops
- digital cameras
- digital video cameras
- printers
- digital projectors
- interactive whiteboards

They also provide information on the following:

- networking
- software licensing
- acceptable user policies
- computer viruses
- software

The full range of advice sheets is available to download from the NCTE website by clicking the relevant one at the following link: www.ncte.ie/ICTAdviceSupport/AdviceSheets/

Further information can be accessed at:

www.ncte.ie/NCTEInitiatives/TechnologyIntegrationInitiative/

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The NCTE provides a comprehensive programme of ICT courses (both tutor-led and online), workshops, support activities and training resources to primary and post-primary teachers via the regional network of education centres. While courses include ICT skills, they are mainly focused on the integration of ICT into the curriculum. All NCTE courses are fully funded for teachers attending and cover a range of areas including:

- Developing an e-Learning Plan (see below)
- Web 2.0
- Digital media/video
- Internet and email
- Internet safety
- Web design
- Post-primary subject specific (Technology subjects (T4), History, Geography)



A new course *Developing an e-Learning Plan* is aimed at ICT co-ordinating teachers (or any teachers involved in ICT planning) and focuses on the process of developing the e-Learning Plan, using this handbook, the e-Learning Roadmap and a range of other resources.

All NCTE courses can be tailored and run as whole school training events. For more information on this and other courses log on to www.ncte.ie/icctraining

Video exemplars

Video clips have been developed to assist schools in identifying a vision for the integration of ICT. They were filmed in a number of Irish schools that have successfully integrated ICT into their practice as effective learning and teaching tools.

The scenarios include:

- interviews with principals regarding their role in the e-Learning planning process
- interviews with ICT co-ordinating teachers on e-Learning planning in their schools
- interviews with students regarding the use of ICT in their schools
- exemplars of best practice of ICT integration at all levels.

The videos are available to view at www.ncte.ie/elearningplan

e-Links

e-Links is NCTE's new ICT co-ordinating teachers' online supported network which provides access to support material, advice and best practice guides to support the role of the ICT co-ordinating teacher. It provides ICT co-ordinating teachers with the opportunity to collaborate and share resources and information online and facilitates access to local and online CPD provided by NCTE. It is currently available to all post primary ICT co-ordinating teachers, and will be made available to primary ICT co-ordinating teachers in the future. For more information log on to www.ncte.ie



Digital Content

All schools require access to relevant, engaging and educative digital content and to content creation tools. Access to the schools broadband network will deliver wide-ranging learning resources directly to teachers and students in all schools. The Digital Content initiative focuses on providing digital resources relevant to students and teachers. This includes evaluation of independently-produced software and production of digital resources for key areas of the curriculum.

Online content creation tools allow teachers and students to create and share their own teaching and learning content. The use of online learning environments (VLEs) and school websites provides opportunities to build and share content. The expertise of the teacher remains central to the development of digital content for Irish schools and the NCTE aims to support teachers in contributing to the content pool appropriate to the Irish curriculum.

Scoilnet is the primary vehicle for the publication and dissemination of digital content materials, but several stand-alone satellite websites are also included within the digital content portfolio. The digital content team also supports and promotes the use of digital content in learning and teaching through the continuing professional development initiative.

For more information, log on to: www.ncte.ie/NCTEInitiatives/DigitalContent/

The screenshot shows the Scoilnet website interface. At the top, there is a logo for 'scoilnet portal for Irish education' and navigation links for 'Home', 'Contact us', and a search bar. Below the logo are five main navigation tabs: 'TEACHERS', 'STUDENTS', 'PARENTS', 'MANAGEMENT', and 'OUR SITES'. A breadcrumb trail indicates 'You are here: Home /'. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Ask about Ireland:** A large green banner with a map of Ireland and various icons. Below it, there are links for 'Site of the Week: Ask About Ireland', 'Swine Flu (All levels)', 'Interactive Timelines & Images', and 'Dates & Festivals in September'.
- NEW SERVICE:** A section promoting 'World Book Kids', 'World Book Student', and 'World Book Advanced' with a call to action: 'Click to discover World Book through Scoilnet More...'.
- Our resources:** A section with a question mark icon, listing 'Primary - Most Viewed' (e.g., Counties of Ireland, Cities and Towns of Ireland) and 'Post Primary - Most Viewed' (e.g., Age of Explorations).
- Popular areas:** A section with a question mark icon, listing 'Top 10' (e.g., August 3 - August 24) and 'Schools Online' (e.g., Rural Mayo school site named Star Site).
- Your questions:** A section with a question mark icon, listing '10 ways to use Scoilnet', 'Scoilnet and IEG', 'What is Scoilnet Webhosting / Blogging?', 'What is Scoilnet Maps and who has access to it?', 'Are there alternatives to traditional sports?', 'Teaching with Interactive Whiteboards', and 'What is ODD?'.
- Get involved:** A section with a question mark icon, listing 'Web 2.0 in the classroom', 'Follow Scoilnet on Twitter', 'Blogs: Irish schools are blogging.', 'Wais: Uses in the classroom.', and 'Podcasts: Why podcast?'.

 On the right sidebar, there is a 'school directory' section, a 'newsletter' sign-up form, and filters for 'Teachers' (Primary, Post-Primary) and 'Students' (Post-Primary) with a 'Subscribe' button. At the bottom of the sidebar, there is a 'TV programmes with a learning focus' section and an 'Interactive poll'.

Scoilnet (www.scoilnet.ie)

The Scoilnet initiative develops and manages the Department of Education and Science's portal for Irish education. Scoilnet provides thousands of resources and articles in a digital database covering all subject areas of the primary and post primary curriculum. The 'Resource Finder' retrieves from this database and is a unique feature of the site through which 11,500 resources are reviewed and categorised by a panel of teachers.

Scoilnet is the Irish member of the **European Learning Resource Exchange (LRE)** and through the **Scoilnet Search facility** provides access to over 100,000 resources from educational databases across Europe.

Scoilnet is a key source of online digital reference content. **World Book**, the renowned encyclopaedia and reference source has been purchased by NCTE and is now available through Scoilnet via the Schools Broadband Network. The World Book Online, which is available to schools, contains the entire text of the 22-volume Encyclopaedia, plus illustrations, video clips, 3D panoramic views, and sound files. Articles bring together a complete story with multimedia content, as well as research aids and links to related information.

NCTE has worked with the post primary professional development and curriculum support services to develop a number of subject specific websites and projects. These include:

- [French.ie](http://www.french.ie) www.french.ie
- [German.ie](http://www.german.ie) www.german.ie
- [Geography Support Service](http://www.geog.ie) www.geog.ie
- [HIST \(History In-service Team\)](http://www.hist.ie) www.hist.ie
- [I Am An Artist](http://www.iamanartist.ie) www.iamanartist.ie
- [ImageBank](http://www.imagebank.ie) www.imagebank.ie
- [Look at History](http://www.scoilnet.ie/lookathistory/) www.scoilnet.ie/lookathistory/
- [Science Unleashed](http://www.scienceunleashed.ie) www.scienceunleashed.ie
- [Sci-Spy](http://www.scispy.ie) www.scispy.ie
- [Scoilnet Maps](http://maps.scoilnet.ie) maps.scoilnet.ie

For more information, log on to: www.ncte.ie/NCTEInitiatives/Scoilnet/

Special Educational Needs (SEN) and ICT

The *SEN and ICT Initiative* is incorporated within other NCTE initiatives to develop resources and supports relating to special needs education. This initiative provides advice on assistive technologies for students with special educational needs as well as digital resources and information on relevant professional development courses for teachers.

For more information, see: www.ncte.ie/NCTEInitiatives/SpecialNeedsICT/

Internet Safety

Webwise.ie, the NCTE's internet safety initiative, focuses on raising awareness of online safety issues and encouraging the safe and responsible use of the internet. It provides information, advice, tools, demonstrations and streamed videos to foster good practice among students, parents, teachers and schools. It regularly carries out research on internet usage by young people.



Webwise supports schools and teachers in creating a safe online learning environment by providing acceptable use policy templates, advice sheets and internet safety learning and teaching resources (in the form of both interactive online lessons and classroom-based

activities) for primary and post-primary teachers. Webwise distributed an Internet Safety Education Pack to every school and all resources, teaching materials and publications are available at www.webwise.ie.

Webwise is the Irish Internet Safety awareness node within InSafe, the European network of Internet Safety awareness nodes. It works collaboratively with The National Parents Council to host Internet Safety seminars for parents entitled *//: Webwise_Parents ://* and created a teen advice and support website Watchyourspace.ie which links to Childline.

Webwise, collaborating with the Continuing Professional Development initiative, has also created courses for teachers: *//: Integrating Internet Safety into Teaching + Learning ://* and a social networking workshop for teachers: *//: Bebo! What's going on? ://*.

Support is also provided to teachers and schools through support groups provided in local Education Centres.

See www.ncte.ie/InternetSafety/

Digital Schools

The *Digital Schools Award* is currently available to all primary schools and will be extended to post-primary schools in the future. It recognises excellence in a school's approach to the integration of ICT in learning and teaching. The award recognises the use of ICT through good practice, expertise and innovation in learning and teaching.

School participation in the *Digital Schools Award* initiative is optional. Schools who meet the criteria are presented with a Digital School Award, including a specially designed plaque and artwork which can be used on the school's literature and web site. The school will be listed as a Digital School on the Digital Schools website where examples of work and good practice from the school will be displayed.

The e-Learning handbook has incorporated the Digital School criteria into the e-Learning Roadmap. More information on the Digital Schools Award is available at www.digitalschools.ie Interested schools should apply via this website.

Education Centre network

The Education Centre network supports the delivery of the NCTE's ICT implementation plan at local level by the provision of a range of ICT CPD opportunities in the Education Centres and in local schools as required.